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HENRY FORD, President.
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W. J. CAMERON, Editor.

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Two Birds With One Stone

IF PRESIDENT HARDING was tardy in declaring himself for disarmament, he has atoned by his wisdom in making his call for a conference on the subject cover also the closely related Pacific and Far Eastern problems. Secretary Hughes, unquestionably, deserves a large share of credit for the policy indicated by the statement regarding the matter issued from the State Department, and in which even the severest critics of the Administration will admit that it has distinctly scored. The world now knows that America has a foreign policy—and one worthy of her.

Ordinarily, the rule "one thing at a time" is to be commended. But on this occasion, by killing two birds with one stone, President Harding makes all the surer of achieving the immediate objective. With something like a definite and reasonable agreement between Japan, China, Britain and the United States on a policy in the Pacific which shall be fair and just all 'round, the most formidable obstacle to the limitation of naval armaments will be removed. Fortunately, the very full discussion during the past few weeks in London of the question of renewal of the Anglo-Japanese treaty of alliance has prepared the way for a disarmament conference which should be effective, and which it is now expected will be opened in Washington on the third anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended the World War.

The stand taken by Premier Meighen, of Canada, throughout the Imperial Conference has been marvelously illuminating as to the very substantial community of interest, as of sentiment, that exists between the British Overseas Dominions and the United States. His argument was seconded enthusiastically by the Australian, New Zealand and South African premiers. It must have made it entirely clear to the mind of the London Government that something more than fear for the Indian Empire entered into the question. Lloyd George was made to realize that an alliance which by any possibility could be conceived of as under any circumstances arraying Britain against the United States would inevitably alienate those dominions from the mother country. Not the Indian Empire only, but the British Empire was at stake.

Japan can hardly fail to take the hint. If there is to be an understanding between the Pacific Powers, Occidental and Oriental, it must be a tripartite agreement, or rather a quadruple entente, for Secretary Hughes has made it plain that China is not to be left out. Such a quadruple entente once settled, naval disarmament will become logical and inevitable. The last pretext for increased naval armaments will have been removed. Disarmament on land will come later.

For the present, sufficient is the blessing of the big beginning which the coming Washington conference will mark. Tremendous issues will be thrashed out and decided, and the occasion cannot fail to prove of immense importance to the future of mankind. Let us devoutly hope that its atmosphere will be free from the malign influences which made hash of the world's hopes of international peace at Paris.

The Other 99 Per Cent

"THERE is something amusing," writes a DEARBORN INDEPENDENT reader, "in the naïveté with which you seem, in your editorial headed 'A Picked One Per Cent,' to accept as gospel President Burton's assumption that the one per cent of our people who are college graduates somehow hold a monopoly of the qualities that constitute leadership. The single shin-

THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT

ing instance of Abraham Lincoln should be sufficient to refute that fallacy."

The editorial mentioned was concerned not so much with the question of college education as a preparation for leadership as with the astounding single fact that in a democratic community 99 per cent of the boys and girls enrolled in our common schools are barred from the advantages, whatever they may be, of what we call higher education. Incidentally, 90 per cent of them are denied even secondary education. This in itself, we suggested, constitutes a grave problem, quite regardless of the efficiency or inefficiency of such college education as is given to the one per cent.

It may be that in many cases a college education is more hindrance than help. When W. D. Howells wrote to James Russell Lowell deploring his lack of the advantages of a college career, the poet-philosopher, himself a Harvard product and with scholasticism ingrained by experience as a professor in that seat of learning, replied that Howells should thank his good fortune that he had escaped having his genius "pressed in the college mold."

Not only Lincoln, but practically every one of our Presidents whose names are remembered, achieved leadership, and the mental, moral and spiritual powers on which leadership is based, without the aid of college training. There will always be men of native genius and ability forceful enough to find their true places, whatever their circumstances. Elbert Hubbard went through Harvard after he was thirty and had earned enough money selling soap to pay his way and have enough left over for a start in business. He never thought very highly of our universities or their methods and results. In a perhaps inadequate way, he sought to indicate at East Aurora a line of procedure that would link learning more closely with "life, love and labor." Some men get much from a college education and other men little. It probably depends upon the man quite as much as on the college.

The big point is that an intelligent electorate is absolutely essential to true democracy, if democracy is to mean something more than mob-rule, government by the ignorant and unfit. Making university education available to every child born in America might not solve the problem. Indeed, we are likely some day to conclude that the place of the university in our system of education today is a much over-rated one. The university has its place; but the actual fitting of young men and women for their jobs and at the same time for the citizenship that demands sound principles, clear thinking and courageous action surely has a much larger place. And this we seem to be in some danger of forgetting.

Grocery Stores on Wheels

THE world does move and wheels facilitate its motion. Going one better than the "chain stores," a company has been organized on a nation-wide scale to put into operation a system of traveling grocery and meat stores. Model grocery stores have been fitted up on large motor trucks, the eatables being tastefully and systematically arranged and displayed on shelves and counters running along one side, somewhat on the plan of the "serve-self cafeteria." The truck is driven up to the housewife's door on schedule time. She has already been furnished with a price list of special offerings and staples. Entering at one end, she is furnished with a neat basket in which her selections are deposited as she slides it along a counter to the cashier's desk at the other end.

It is claimed for the new scheme that it will prove an effective blow at the high cost of living. Nothing can be more certain than that there is immense waste in our methods of food distribution. Certainly some such method as the motor truck grocery—apotheosis of the itinerant huckster—should effect important economies in the process of bringing goods from producer to consumer. That the consumer should have to pay about a dollar for the bushel of potatoes for which the farmer receives half-a-dollar, or that a hungry man should be compelled to dig up for a tiny brace of lamb chops as much as the sheep-raiser gets for a whole sheep, is a reflection on our general level of intelligence.

The war familiarized us with traveling kitchens and commissary wagons, while night workers in large cities have long been acquainted with lunch rooms on wheels. It is plain that these devices are susceptible of promising development. Waste has often been termed our national sin. Yet one of the greatest of Americans in "Poor Richard's Almanac," a century and more ago, gave the world that pithy proverb, "A penny saved is a penny gained," with its sequel, "Take care of the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." The new departure heralds new gains of thrift in both time and money.

Light on the Coal Problem

WASHINGTON observers report an upheaval in the lobby consequent on the introduction of Senator Frelinghuysen's "coal stabilization" bill. From the violence of the opposition that is being shown by the representatives of the big mine-owners, it might be supposed that the measure was of a drastic nature. One would imagine it threatened dire penalties and hard restriction for those under suspicion of covert or open violation of the anti-trust laws with avaricious intent.

In truth, the bill is a marvel of moderation. The one thing it does provide for is the letting in of daylight on the weird mechanism by which extortionate prices are maintained in the coal industry, regardless of the ups and downs of the price-level of other commodities. Publicity, of course, is the one thing that the profiteers hate and fear. So they have started their publicity bureaus to howling up and down the land that the United States Senate is "going Bolshevik." The very idea of the Department of Commerce being empowered to look into the coal business causes the coal lobby to see red. In merely seeking to bring to the surface any abuses that militate against the rights and interests of the people, leaving the rest to public opinion, Senator Frelinghuysen is letting the profiteers down gently. His measure may, indeed, be the means of forestalling far more drastic schemes of regulation and control contemplated by more radical members of either house. In their rage, the coal men are blind to this.

It is all very well to shout that the Government must keep its hands off business; but if we want less governmental interference in business we must have less of the kind of "business" that seeks to usurp the functions of a sort of super-state, exercising in its own selfish interests powers that ought to be exclusive to government.

The threadbare cry of "Bolshevism," now aimed at Senator Frelinghuysen, should deceive no one. Rather we should let the lobbyists' alarm cause us to wake up and ask if the Bolshevism that is the negation of logic and wild rule by a minority is not more apparent in the coal combines than in the Senate.

Let America Lead

PRESIDENT HIBBEN, of Princeton, recently spoke with inspiring force and illumination on the duty which the present opportunity for world service offers America. With all his being he resented the interpretation put upon the cry now heard throughout the land, "America First," as standing for a self-centered policy. Rather would he have it widely interpreted as "America first in the service of the world; first in its ready response to the world's needs."

Dr. Hibben did well to dwell pointedly on the particular world service that obviously presents our opportunity and our duty today. "Let America be first," he said, "to use its great power and influence to realize the desire of all peoples of the earth, the disarmament of the nations and the permanent peace of the world."

Here, surely, is the open door to a great world opportunity. To miss it by thinking to purchase immunity from international obligation by paying the price of loss of international leadership would be foolish. Taking the lead in disarmament means taking the lead in bringing America and the world out of the fog of materialistic doubt into which we have drifted. It is our opportunity to lay the corner stone in a world structure that, despite the darkness and horror that have clouded its first quarter, shall make this century ere its close stand out in history distinctively as the century of moral and spiritual progress: the century of peace.

Jan Christian Smuts

JUST as the world seemed to be despairing of the existence of a genuine world leader, Jan Christian Smuts looms on the horizon as a force of commanding influence. By training and temperament, character and experience, he would seem to be the heaven-sent man of the hour. No other can be named at all likely to have succeeded in the titanic task he has undertaken of bringing about a settlement of the Irish question. In Dublin he met the Irish leaders as man to man. Speaking with irresistible confidence and conviction, he succeeded in bringing about an immediate truce and assent to a conference destined to effect a final settlement of the unhappy differences between the two kingdoms that have been the source of such protracted bitterness and bloodshed. On his return to London, General Smuts repaired immediately to King George. There is something of prophetic illumination in the vision that realizes that the whole situation has reached a point beyond the capacity of stubborn and stupid politicians to handle. The King reigns but does not govern in Britain. But the King is still the King.